

Committee Work To Date

1. Reviewed the types of neighborhood conservation districts generally and those in Cambridge.
2. Reviewed the historical development of the area.
3. Traveled the neighborhood twice as a group and many times individually.
4. Viewed pictures of every building in the area.
5. Discussed reports of the proceedings at meetings of other NCD Commissions in Cambridge.
6. Discussed what an NCD Commission should have considered if it were reviewing changes to existing structures that were made many years ago and the construction of existing structures that were newly built many years ago.
7. Discussed the issues in the following list.

Issues

1. Does the area under study qualify as a neighborhood conservation district as defined in the ordinance? In a preliminary vote, a majority thought so. Definition: "any area within the City containing places and structures which... are of importance to the architectural, aesthetic, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City, and which considered together cause such area to constitute a distinctive neighborhood or to have a distinctive character in terms of its exterior features."
2. Should the boundaries of the neighborhood conservation district be those of the area under study? Should Chauncy Street and the north side of Linnaean Street be excluded? A majority voted to exclude the Montrose Spa building.
3. Future development in the area.
5. The common characteristics of places and structures in the area.
6. Effect of zoning laws, particularly on additions, porch enclosures and dormers, and the need for variances. (The area is zoned mostly B, two-family, with some C-2, apartment houses.)

7. Procedures at NCD Commission meetings and the conduct of meetings, including the use of Roberts' Rules of Order.
8. What factors should an NCD Commission examine in deciding whether proposed work on a structure or construction of a new structure is "incongruous to the historic aspects, architectural significance or the distinctive character of the...neighborhood conservation district?"
9. Should an NCD Commission be governed by specific standards in making decisions? If so, what should the standards be?
10. Should an NCD Commission apply different standards to work on structures or categories of structures which are significant in the area and ones that are not? That is, should structures such as the three pre-1820 houses, double houses, Queen Annes, 2nd Empires, or some of these categories, be more protected than other structures from changes?
11. What categories of work should be exempt from review by an NCD Commission? Among the specific ones suggested so far are dormers conforming to the Board of Zoning Appeal's standards, fences of certain heights, window replacement and minor porch enclosures.